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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 1, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Offer of Nuclear-Capable Weapons to France

In view of our current difficulties with the French on atomic cooperation, you will be interested in the instructions sent to our Embassy in Paris on June 27, authorizing a formal offer of NIKE and HONEST JOHN battalions to France. In accordance with recommendations of General Norstad, our message instructs the MAAG to request French confirmation that these weapons will be utilized by NATO-committed forces; that they will be stationed in Germany and that nuclear warheads will be supplied and serviced from the NATO Atomic Stockpile in Germany; and that the equipment will be made available for recovery when no longer so used. Heretofore, offers of advanced weapons to France have referred to the bilateral Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement without requiring confirmation of these specific points. French agreement with respect to the currently offered weapons will, however, apply to HONEST JOHN battalions previously accepted by the French and scheduled for delivery later this year; it will not be prerequisite to delivery of a previously accepted NIKE battalion which is scheduled to begin in late July but will be required before this unit is provided with a nuclear capability.

Implicit in the conditions of the current offer of NIKE and HONEST JOHN equipment is an offer to the French to arrange to use the NATO Atomic Stockpile in Germany. This is the first time such an offer will be extended. We hope acceptance might in time possibly increase French willingness to permit the establishment in France of the NATO Atomic Stockpile for United States and French use (once French forces gain some experience with the Stockpile). Eventually, a Stockpile agreement, even if only for French forces in Germany, would necessitate a 144(b) atomic cooperation agreement to permit training to enable the French to achieve full operational atomic capability. Until then, however, training could be given to enable them to achieve a limited atomic capability.



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By AK, NARS, Date 6/9/77

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